

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-15 DRC-01 /130 W

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R 121053Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1403

INFO AMCONSUL KADUNA

AMCONSUL IBADAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, SGEN, NI

SUBJECT: PRESS HARASSMENT CONTINUES

REF: LAGOS 8058

SUMMARY: THREE RECENT CASES POSSIBLE PRESS HARASSMENT
HAVE RECEIVED ONLY LIMITED PUBLICITY, SUGGESTING ATTENTION
TO AMAKIRI CASE RESULTS LARGELY FROM PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT
INFLECTED. END SUMMARY

1. IN STRIKING CONTRAST TO PRESS COVERAGE AND PUBLIC
OUTCRY OVER AMAKIRI CASE, ONLY LIMITED PUBLICITY HAS
BEEN GIVEN THREE RECENT CASES OF POSSIBLE PRESS HARASS-

MENT BY STATE GOVERNMENTS. IN FIRST CASE, A DAILY TIMES
CORRESPONDENT IS FACING COURT CHARGES FOR PUBLISHING STORY
THAT ALLEGEDLY EXCITED FEELINGS OF DISAFFECTION AGAINST
NORTH-EASTERN STATE GOVERNMENT. STORY PUBLISHED
AUGUST 14 CONCERNED ALLEGED RESIGNATION OF SEVEN
STATE CENSUS OFFICIALS FOR MISMANAGEMENT OF 20,000
NAIRA (\$30,000). POLICE STILL INVESTIGATING AND COURT
HEARING FOR REPORTER HAS BEEN ADJOURNED UNTIL NOVEMBER.

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2. IN SECOND CASE, ACTING EDITOR AND LITERARY CORRESPONDENT OF THE RENAISSANCE (OWNED BY EAST-CENTRAL STATE GOVERNMENT) WERE ARRESTED OCTOBER 6 AND 8 BY EAST-CENTRAL STATE POLICE AND ARE STILL BEING HELD. ARRESTS REPORTEDLY STEM FROM SERIES OF ARTICLES ON BOUNDARY DISPUTES PUBLISHED IN THE RENAISSANCE. NO OFFICIAL STATEMENTS ON ARRESTS HAVE BEEN MADE.

3. THIRD CASE INVOLVES ARREST OCTOBER 8 BY LAGOS POLICE OF DAILY EXPRESS ACTING EDITOR AND TWO SENIOR MEMBERS OF EDITORIAL STAFF. THEIR ARRESTS ARE BELIEVED TO RELATE TO FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL IN THAT PAPER'S OCTOBER 5 EDITION WHICH CRITICIZED LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT OVER RECENT BUS FARE INCREASES IN LAGOS. THESE THREE WERE RELEASED ON BAIL.

4. COMMENT: IT IS EVIDENT THAT FUROR OVER AMAKIRI INCIDENT HAS NOT TEMPERED WILLINGNESS OF VARIOUS STATE GOVERNMENTS TO ARREST PRESS OFFICIALS WHO PRINT STORIES WHICH INTRUDE INTO SENSITIVE AREAS. ALL THREE CASES HAVE RECEIVED VERY LIMITED PRESS COVERAGE, PERHAPS BECUASE ALL FACTS NOT YET KNOWN BECAUSE INCIDENTS ARE NOT SEEN AS IMPOSITION OF CENSORSHIP BY GOVERNMENT. HANDLING OF THESE CASES APPEARS TO INDICATE AMAKIRI CASE RECEIVED PUBLIC ATTENTION LARGELY BECAUSE PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT WAS INFLICTED AND NOT PRIMARILY BECAUSE PRESS WAS JEALOUSLY GUARDING ITS FREEDOM.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HARASSMENT, POLITICAL REPRESSION, ARRESTS, THE PRESS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 OCT 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973LAGOS08267
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: LAGOS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731036/aaaabafb.tel
Line Count: 89
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: LAGOS 8058
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <11-Jan-2002 by martinjw>; APPROVED <31-Jan-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS HARASSMENT CONTINUES
TAGS: PINS, SGEN, NI, (AMAKIRI, MINERE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005